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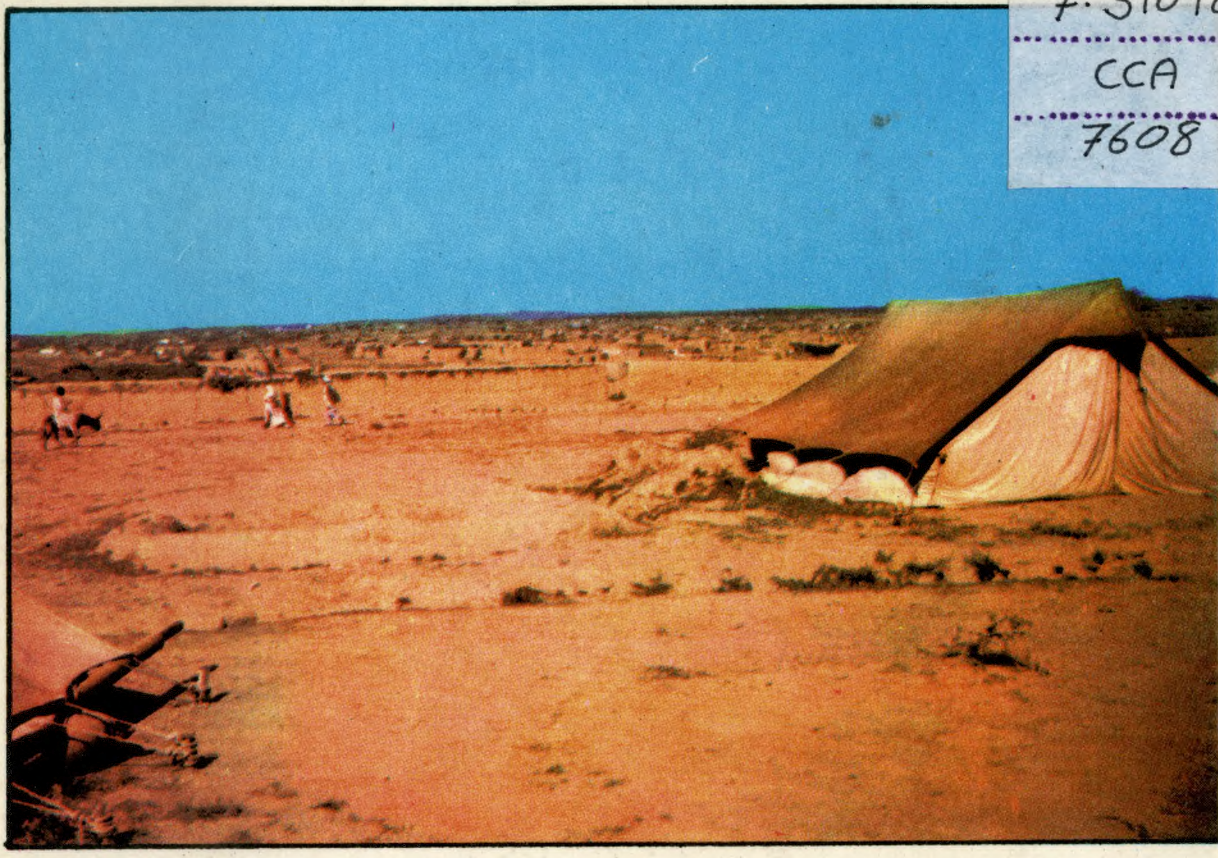
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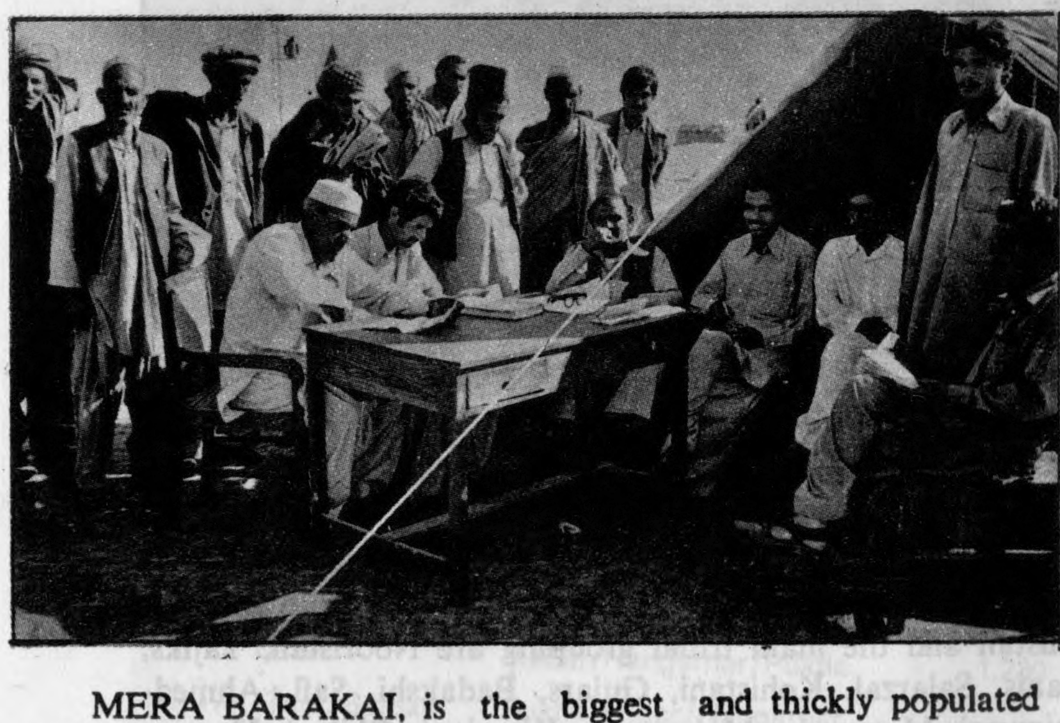
MERA BARAKAI REFUGEES CAMP.

The population of Afghanistan is estimated to be 15/20 million spread over an area of 253861 square miles having 1500 miles common boder with Pakistan.

The flight of the courageous Afghan people from their homes is a natural phenomonon. The Soviet sponsored revolutions in Afghanistan with the direct Soviet armed intervention compelled the people of Afghanistan to migrate and seek refugee in Pakistan. The Political, Social, Cultural and Religious supression coupled with ruthless attitude of Kabul Administration and the Alien forces created an atmosphere of complete insecurity and geneal scare and it become impossible for them to stay in their homeland.

The first batch of Afghan refugees which crossed over to Pakistan in 1976 (during Daud's Regime) was 1500. This number rose to 18329 by the end of December, 1978. Afterwards the trickle developed into a torrent and by 31st December 1981, the number rose to 1953913 in the N. W. F. P. Province.

To accommodate and provide basic relief items on purely humanitarian grounds, the Government of Pakistan established a number of refugee camps along the 1500 miles long Pak-Afghan Border.



MERA BARAKAI, is the biggest and thickly populated refugee camp in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. It is located 35 Kilometers East of Mardan off Swabi Road, near Swabi. Mera Barakai Refugee Camp consists of six Refugee Tentage Villages having a total population of 135313 registered individuals as on 31st December 1981.

MERA BARAKAI, Refugee Camp was established in March, 1981, when the inflow of refugees from Afghanistan assumed alarming proportion. From 30692 in March, 1981, the number rose to 135313 in October, 1981. The increase in population in Mera Barakai Camp is shown in the chart below:—

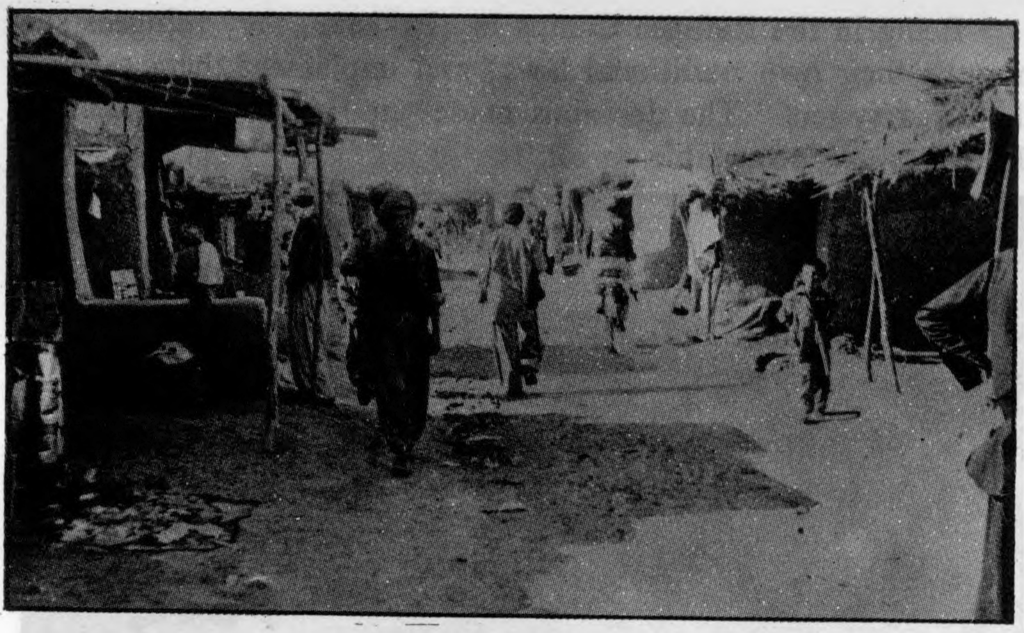
		Male	Female	Total population.
March,	1981	15392	15300	30692
June.	1981	64648	70625	135273
December	1981	64678	70635	135313

To facilitate proper administration and speedy distribution of relief assistance, six RTVs (Refugees Tentage Villages) have been established in the camp. Each RTV constitute the basic administrative unit looking after a minimum of 5000 Refugees or 1000 families. An RTV is placed under the RTV Administrator who is responsible in all respects for the Administration, welfare, discipline, distribution of Cash maintenance allowance and other relief items, etc., of refugees in the R. T. V. The RTV Administrator is assisted by the staff working under him which consists of six sections, **viz,** Administration Registration, Food, Relief, Accounts and Security Sections.



ETHNIC COMPLEXION OF THE CAMP.

The Afghan Refugees have come from different provinces of Afghanistan and the main tribal grouping are Nooristan, Tajiks, Mishwanis, Salarzai, Kohistani, Gujars, Badakshi, Safi, Ahmedzai, Shinwari, Mamund, Mohmand, Khogiani, Ghilgai, Hazara, Mangal, Jaji, Zadran, Sabri Suleman Khel, Qandaharis, Uzbeks and Turkmans. In this particular camp the refugees are from the Pushto speaking tribes of Afghanistan in the proportion explained below:—



Sl. No.	Name of Tribe	Provinces	Total Population
1.	Ahmed Zai	Puktia/Lugar/Baghlan/Kabul	28,071
2.	Tajak	Puktia/Lugar/Kabul/ Nangarhar	40,135
3.	Khugyani	Nangarhar	12,814
4.	Mohmand	Nangarhar/Laghman/Logar Kunnar	7,970
5.	Safi	Puktia/Baghlan/Laghman/ Kunnar	6,543
6.	Jabbar Khel	Nangarhar/Logar	4,122
7.	Allabdin Khel	Puktia/Logar	3,866
8.	Shinwari	Puktia/Nangarhar/Laghman Logar	3,882
9.	Kundar Khel	Laghman/Parwan	3,883
10.	Zadran	Puktia	3,610
11.	Suleman Khel	Logar	2,899
12.	Badin Khel	Nangarhar	2,109
13.	Abdur Rahim Zai	Kabul/Logar	1,501
14.	Tota Khel	Puktia/Kunnar/Logar	1,359
15.	Isa Khel	Puktia/Logar/Nangarhar/ Qundus	1,485
16.	Arab	Kabul/Nangarhar/Puktia	1,230
17.	Turk, Saidan Mangol, Saadat, Salar Zai, Niazi Tajak and others.	Puktia/Logar/Nangarhar Kabul	9,834
			1,35,313

Being in the Refugee Camps in Pakistan, the refugees still observe their own traditional laws and implement them through the Jirga system. The decisions made in Jirga by the elders of the tribes are acceptable to all.



RELIEF ASSISTANCE.

During the initial stages of refugees influx, relief assistance consisted mainly of cash subsidy (Rs. 120.00 per head per month) and provision of tents for shelter and only the Government of Pakistan bore the burden of refugees care single handed during this period. In the beginning of 1980, two major U. N. Agencies the UNHCR & W. F. P. produced their programme of assistance. Later some other U. N. Agencies like UNICEF, WHO & FAO also joined and are providing assistance in their respective fields. The relief operation have received additional contribution from some of the International Voluntary Agencies and a number of friendly countries. The main financial assistance has been provided by the UNHCR whose representatives work in the entire province and co-ordinate with the functionaries of the Commissionerate at various levels.

The relief assistance may be categorised as under:—

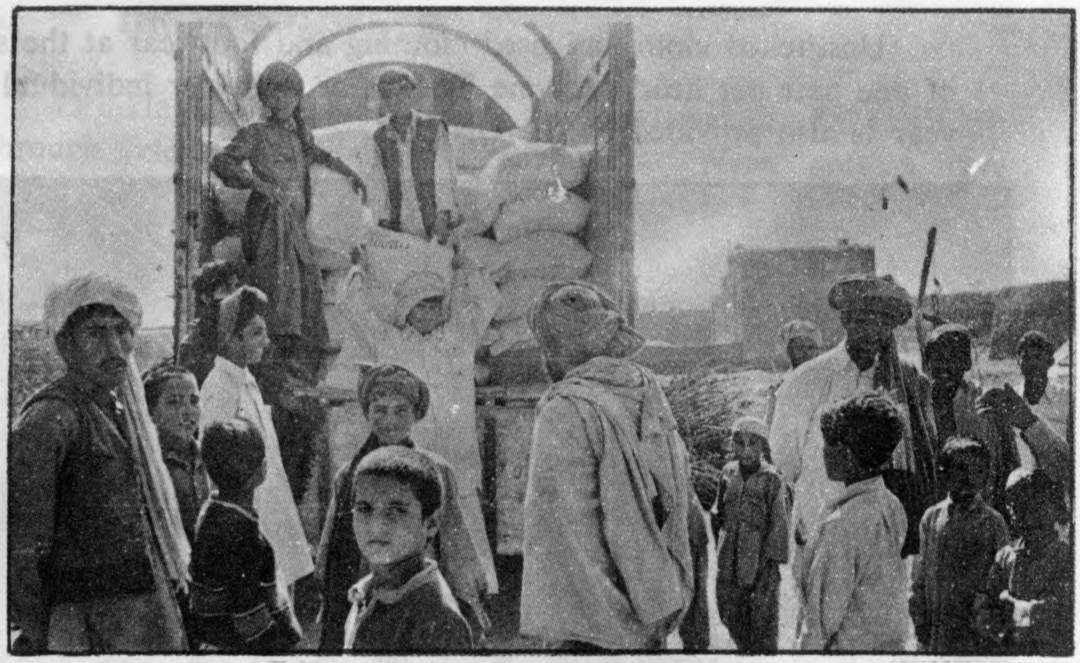


1. **CASH MAINTENANCE ALLOWACE.**

Cash maintenance allowance @ Rs. 50/- per head per month upto the maximum of Rs. 500/- per family is distributed from the Budget of Government of Pakistan.

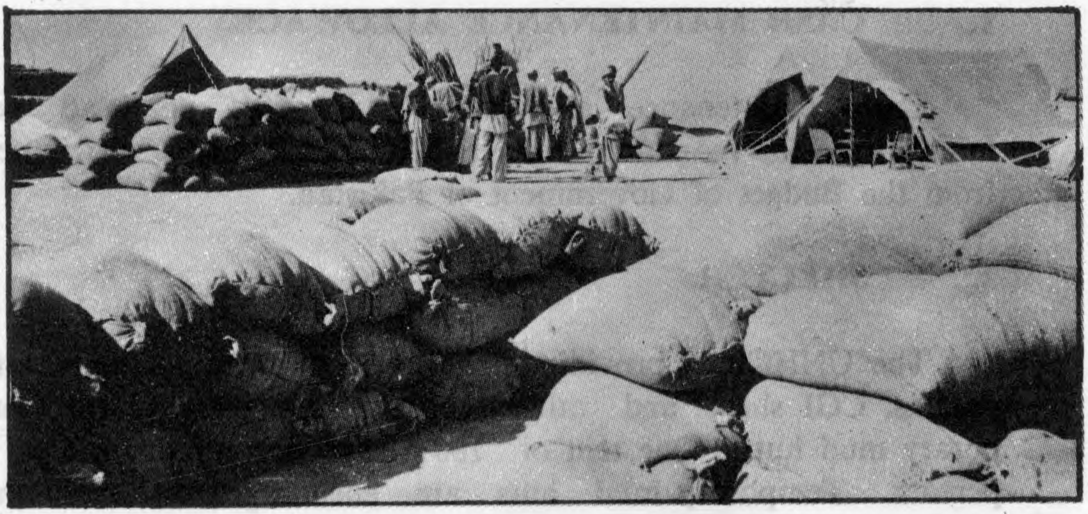
2. **SHELTER.**

The UNHCR is providing shelter in the form of tents, tarpaulins, CGI sheets and other construction material for temporary mud huts. One tent of 180 Lbs. accommodate 5 to 7 persons. Temporary mud huts are encouraged to avoid the rigours of extrame wheather.



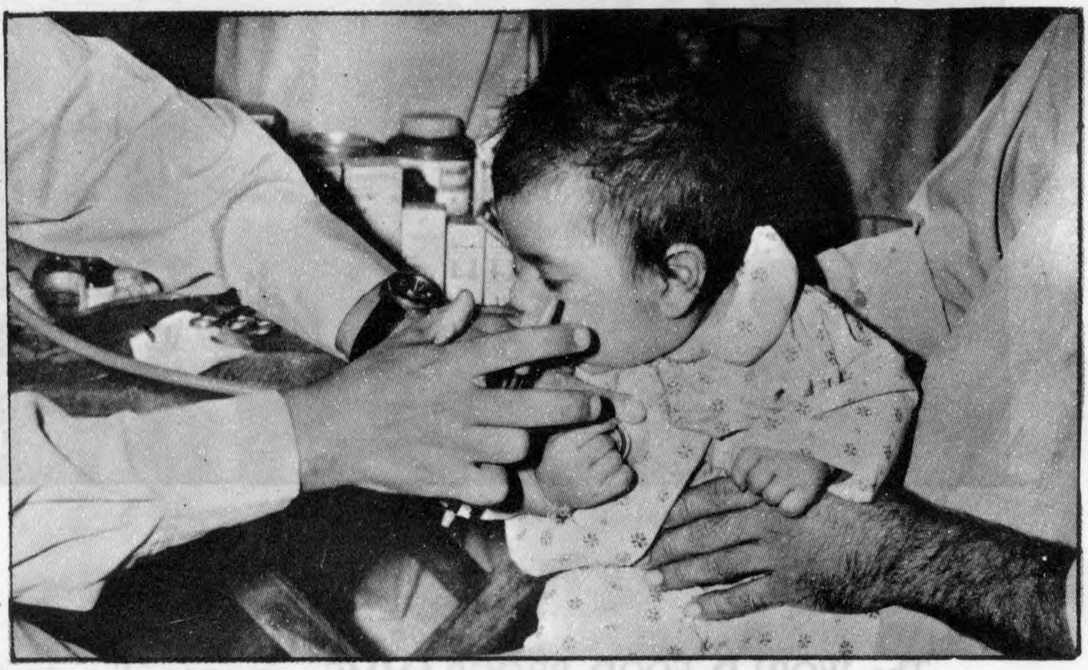
3. **FOOD.**

The WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, is providing basic food rations like wheat, Dried Skimmed Milk, Edible Oil and Pulses (when available). The UNHCR provides supplement food items like Sugar and Tea which are not covered by W. F. P. daily per capita scales of rations supplied are wheat 500 grams per head per day, pulses 40 grams, E/Oil 30 grams Dried Skimmed Milk 30 grams, Sugar 20 grams, Tea 3 grams, Salt 2½ grams per head per day.



4. CLOTHING AND BEDDING.

Unstitched cloth and used clothing and footwear at the scale of one pair per head and one blanket or quilt per individual per year is also provided by the UNHCR.



5. MEDICARE.

Although the Government assisted by UNHCR is looking after medical establishments, essential medicines and medical equipment etc., there are a number of Voluntary Organizations also engaged in this field. In Mera Barakai Camp the "Union Aid for Afghan Refugees" has established five well equipped dispensary besides Mobile Health Units staffed by male and lady doctors with allied technical staff for treatment of refugees. Cases of mild disease are treated at the Static dispensaries located at the camp while serious cases are referred to the District Head Quarter Hospital at Mardan.



6. DRINKING WATER.

Drinking Water Schemes are undertaken by UNICEF through relevant Provincial Departments. Water tankers have been engaged for this purpose besides tube-wells and water pipe lines.

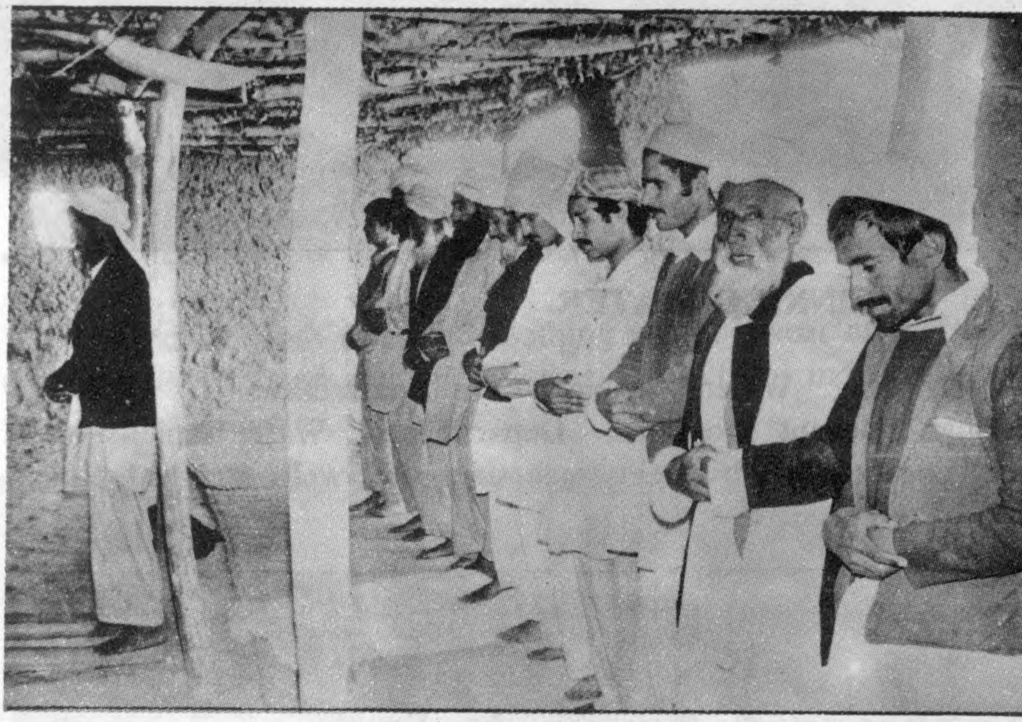


7. EDUCATION.

The Mera Barakai Camp has been provided with Ten Primary Schools for Afghan Children. Three teachers for each school (One Pakistani and two Afghan) with sufficient stationery, text-books, etc., have been provided. The total number of students at the moment is 1042. Besides, Primary schools atleast one Religious Teacher from amongst the Afghans is also provided for each village alongwith necessary material in the Central Mosque of the Village. The Education Cell headed by the Additional Commissioner of A. R. Commissionerate is looking after the Primary Education of Afghan Refugees Children.

8. LIVE STOCK.

Other items not covered above are the live—stock and Veterinary cover, Hygine and Sanitation which include sanitary Inspector with necessary spraying equipment and chemicals for periodical sprays. "Enfant DE Monto" is looking after the hygine and sanitation problems of Mera Barakai Camp.



9. MOSQUES.

Two mosques in each village have been set up to facilitate the refugees in the performance of their religious obligations.



10. COOKING OIL STOVE AND KEROSENE OIL.

To save the forest whealth, each Refugee family has been supplied with one Oil stove, Plastic container of 10 liters each. They are also provided with 9 liters of Kerosese Oil per family per month. The funds for this project have been provided by the UNHCR.



BARA KAI REFUGEES CAMP

AFGHAN REFUGEES IN PAKISTAN

MERA BARAKAI REFUGEES CAMP.